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From Immigrant to Ethnic

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# From Immigrant to Ethnic: Interview with Santina Satti by Joseph Conforti

Santina Satti

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Rhode Island College  
ETHNIC STUDIES PROJECT

Oral History Interview # 13

with

Santina Satti

April 26, 1976

By Joseph Conforti

Tape 1 Side 1

- 8 Born in Lucca, Tuscany. Came to U.S. in 1900 when she was 6 years old. Had attended nursery school at age 5 which was run by nuns. Mother had a fruit stand.
- 22 Her father was already in America. He came in 1898 and was a baker. Worked for his cousin on Federal Hill near St. John's church.
- 32 Family history--grandfather well-educated, from wealthy family but married a servant girl and was disowned. Her father was from the country and her mother from the city.
- 73 Her father was working as a baker in Italy and they were poor. Her uncle was in California and sent for her father. He came and worked for 2 years and sent money back.
- 96 Came on ship with mother, aunt, cousins. Epidemic on ship so they were on board for 40 days. In quarantine at Ellis Island.
- 118 Lived in Providence on Federal Hill for 4 years then moved to Eagle Park because her father got job at another bakery on Charles Street.
- 160 The baker her father worked for hired mostly relatives--would take them in as boarders.
- 176 She attended the Camp Street school until 7th grade then her family bought a house so she went to work to help pay for it.
- 182 Began working at 13 in Wanskuck mills. Got \$3. per week.

Santina Satti

- 188 At that time, Eagle Park was not mainly Italian. Her mother did not speak English well--they were required to speak Italian at home.
- 219 Most of her family was still on Federal Hill--visited often. Her mother shopped there, all walked from Eagle Park.
- 271 Account of St. Ann's church in Eagle Park.
- 293 Italian community in Eagle Park grew after she moved there. Most of them worked in Wanskuck mills. People walked to work so many moved to the area to be nearby.
- 356 Changes when Italians came to Eagle Park.
- 375 Father died when she was 21. Her sister was married so she had to care for her mother. Her husband was a baker who worked with her father. They were married when she was 39.
- 445 Italian community smaller than Federal Hill. Had grocery stores, drug stores, church events, picnics.

Tape 1 Side 2

- 1 Dr. Zambarano was from her neighborhood--his parents had a bar.
- 31 Church was very small but very important. Fund-raising to build bigger church. She sang in the choir there. Women especially went to church, not so much the men.
- 60 Her mother liked the fact that the neighborhood was becoming more Italian. She didn't care because she could speak English.
- 83 She worked at silk mill for \$7. a week. Also worked at International Braid for 15-20 years.
- 92 She didn't belong to any clubs. Father was member of Tuscan Club on Federal Hill--held dances, picnics, outings. They were active in it. At first, a person had to be Tuscan to become member now no longer true.
- 122 She likes Eagle Park because she was brought up there. Remembers band concerts, parades, feast days. Regrets fact that they don't have them now.

Santina Satti

- 149 Her husband was also Tuscan. Cmae to America when he was 21 and lived with his aunt. Worked as a baker and then at the American Screw Company. Also worked in jewelry concern until he was 83 years old.
- 236 She had no children but her nieces and nephews are still in the area.
- 308 When she was young, grown-ups would take her with them because she could speak English. Was common in Italian community to have someone as interpreter.
- 330 She feels more American than Italian bēfāūsē she came at a young age and was with Americans more than the rest of her family. She doesn't feel that she's lost Italian customs although she thinks Italians are very much like Americans now.
- 341 She now cares for a child and tries to teach some Italian words. None of her sister's children can speak Italian.